

Global Higher Education: Perceptions, Practices, and Challenges at Cambodia's Royal University of Phnom Penh

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—世界の「周辺部」における高等教育の国際化：
カンボジア・プノンペン王立大学の意識・実践・課題—

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Abstract

Internationalization of higher education has been a dominant force and is increasing in both importance and scope. This has been reflected in the increased attention and research study on the subject from both practitioners and scholars; nonetheless, the existing literature of internationalization has overwhelmingly been advanced from the perspectives of developed or large developing countries. Little attention has been paid on how internationalization is perceived and implemented in higher educational institutions in small developing countries where resources are scarce and access to up-to-date information and knowledge is limited. Therefore, to complement this gap, this study is carried out to discern the perceptions informing the practices of internationalization at Cambodia's Royal University of Phnom Penh. The study employed mixed methods approach including a survey with 218 respondents and oral interviews with 18 participants who are the students, faculty members, and administrative staff of the university. The study found that their motivations, concerns, preferences, and practices of internationalization were closely related to their understanding, knowledge, and experiences of internationalization, shaped by the historical and socio-political contexts of the country. In addition, the academic and social/cultural aspects of internationalization are more emphasized than the economic ones. The study also showed that the perceptions of internationalization varied according to the professions of the respondents. The study has considerable significance. Besides advancing the existing literature of internationalization with a view from a small developing country at the periphery of global higher education system, the study contributes to higher educational development in Cambodia and benefits both national and international policy makers in the field of higher education in developing countries.

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1. Introduction

Internationalization, defined as the “process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2004, p. 11), has become a dominant factor in higher education in both developed and developing countries. Internationalization is not only inevitable but also continues to increase in importance, scope, and complexity (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Knight, 2008; Stier, 2006). The process of internationalization has been viewed as a response by higher education institutions (HEIs) to globalization (De Wit, 2008; Van der Wende, 2007) and, given the unprecedented force of globalization and technological revolution, HEIs in both developed and developing countries inevitably embrace internationalization in order to become relevant and responsive to both domestic and international trends.

The importance of internationalization of higher education has been reflected in the increasing number of studies in this field in the past decade (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). Nonetheless, the majority of the literature in the field has been advanced from the perspectives of developed countries and their HEIs, especially the American and Anglo-Saxon countries. Those studies approach the internationalization as if it is an homogenous process although they identify both benefits and risks of internationalization and acknowledge the inequality of the existing international knowledge system (Altbach, 1998; Knight, 2008; Marginson, 2010; Schapper & Mayson, 2004; Stier, 2004). According to Altbach (1998), the existing international knowledge system is unequal with American and Western European countries and their institutions being at the center of the system controlling knowledge production, dissemination, and application while developing countries being at the periphery of the system. The different positions occupied by various countries in this uneven global higher education landscape, according to Marginson (2010), depend on a number of factors including the history, geography, resources, and identity of those countries.

Viewed in this light, internationalization is not always perfect and realizing its potential benefits depends on complicated factors including the contexts of HEIs and their countries. In fact, although higher education is always subjected to international force and modern higher education has been influenced by the European models, it has also been shaped by the national and local policy, identity, and contexts (Altbach, 1998; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Knight, 2004; Marginson, 2010; Stier, 2006). In spite of such recognition, few studies have been conducted from the perspectives of small developing countries.

Notwithstanding the negligence, the internationalization of higher education in developing countries deserves attention because internationalization is not a linear process; it “covers realities which are heterogeneous, multi-faceted and frequently

contradictory” (Ivie, 1991, p. 16). In addition, the contextual differences between developed and developing countries make any attempt of applying internationalization of higher education without understanding the ideologies underpinning the process and paying sufficient attention to the contexts fail. Furthermore, copying without proper contextualization and adaptation may result in the danger of academic re-colonization for developing countries because internationalization of higher education is dominated by the Anglo-Saxon paradigm (Mok, 2007). In the context of Asia-Pacific region, internationalization should look beyond the economic and political competitiveness by focusing on “the pursuit of global citizenship, human harmony and a climate of global peace” by honoring the rich cultures of the region (Ng, 2012, p. 1).

With the intent to complement the existing literature gap in the field of internationalization of higher education, this research was carried out to understand the internationalization process at the periphery of the unequal global knowledge system - how internationalization is perceived and implemented in a small developing country’s higher education institution in which there are numerous constraints including scarce resources and limited access to up-to-date information, knowledge, and technology. Particularly, the research is carried out to discern the perceptions, practices, and challenges of internationalization at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), which is a flagship public university in Cambodia, a small developing country in Southeast Asia.

The research has three intents: (1) to discern the meanings, rationales, benefits, and risks of internationalization of higher education, as perceived by the internal stakeholders, namely the students, faculty members and administrative staff of the RUPP, (2) to survey the current practices of internationalization of higher education at the RUPP, and (3) to explore the challenges faced by the RUPP in implementing internationalization activities and programs. Particularly, the research study seeks the answers to the following questions:

1. How do the RUPP’s internal stakeholders such as students, faculty members, and administrative staff perceive the internationalization of higher education?
 - 1.1 Which dimensions of higher education are considered to be important in constituting internationalization?
 - 1.2 What are the rationales and expected benefits for internationalizing the RUPP?
 - 1.3 What are the risks associated with internationalizing the RUPP?
2. What is the current level of practices of internationalization at the RUPP?
3. What are the challenges faced by the RUPP in implementing internationalization?

The study contributes to higher educational development in Cambodia and the

existing literature in the field of internationalization of higher education in a number of ways. Since the study is the first attempt to conduct a comprehensive study on internationalization of higher education in Cambodia, particularly at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), and ends with the discussion of implications and recommendations to improve the internationalization in Cambodian higher education institutions (HEIs); the study has significant contribution to higher educational development in Cambodia through increasing data accumulation, strengthening research capacity of Cambodian HEIs, developing human resources, and improving higher education practices in Cambodia. The study also contributes to the existing literature of internationalization of higher education by looking at the theme from the perspective of a small developing country. Moreover, the findings from this research will guide the future study on internationalization in small developing countries and benefit policy makers including the government officials and international experts working in the field of higher education in developing countries.

2. Cambodian higher education and its internationalization in historical perspectives

Although some form of higher learning existed in the Angkor Empire, which lasted between the 9th and 15th centuries (Chamnan & Ford, 2004), the origin of modern higher education in Cambodia can be traced back to the period of French colonization between 1863 and 1953. From its inception, the historical development of Cambodian modern higher education can be divided into six phases with different courses of internationalization. During the period of French colonization, most of Cambodian higher education took place in the universities in France where a few hundred students from the Cambodian small elite were sent for higher learning (Chandler, 1993). In Cambodia, the French established a few centers and colleges to train Cambodians in order to perform civil service in the colonial government (Fergusson & Masson, 1997). Those centers and colleges were run by the French masters and French was the medium of instruction. The first Cambodian higher education institutions were established at the end of the colonial period and after independence in 1953. For instance, the National Institute of Law, Politics, and Economics, the first institution to offer higher education in Cambodia, was established in 1947; and the first Cambodian university, the Khmer Royal University which has now become the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), was founded in 1960 (Chamnan & Ford, 2004).

After gaining independence under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk between 1953 and 1970, Cambodian higher education was nationalized and seen as a key tool for modernizing the country, and it experienced rapid expansion. Cambodian higher education at that time was still predominantly influenced by the French

education model. Many Cambodian students were sent to France to pursue higher education and French was widely used in the newly established higher education institutions (HEIs) in Cambodia, in which classes were taught by Cambodian returnees from France and French professors (Chamnan & Ford, 2004). Apart from the dominant French influences, Cambodian higher education also received assistance from other countries. For example, Russian language and Russian-designed curricular were used in the Russian-funded Royal Technical University (Fergusson & Masson, 1997) and a number of Cambodian students were sent to Japan for study and training between 1965 and 1974 (John, 1995).

In 1970, the US-backed coup pushed Cambodia to plunge into a full-fledge civil war, which led to the decline of Cambodian higher education system that had been thriving up to that point. The fighting between the US-supported Lon Nol's regime's soldiers and the China-backed Cambodian communists along with American aerial bombardment destroyed and disrupted many schools and HEIs in the provincial and rural areas, leading to the decline of both quantity and quality of Cambodian education system (Fergusson & Masson, 1997). The fall of the Lon Nol government led to the rise of the Khmer Rouge genocidal regime, which reigned between 1975 and 1979.

The Khmer Rouge regime brought Cambodia to year zero and Cambodian higher education to complete cessation. All city-dwellers, including intellectuals, were evacuated, forced to overwork on farms, and targeted for torture and execution; schools, universities, and their contents were abandoned, destroyed, or used for other purposes (Ayres, 1999; Clayton, 1998). The regime's commitment to self-reliance and desire to eradicate the previous regimes' vestiges necessitated the policy of zero tolerance for foreign influences in everyday life and the regime's trivial revolutionary ideology-based education for small children. Foreign languages were banned and many returnees from abroad were jailed, re-educated, and executed. By the time the Khmer Rouge regime was toppled down by the Vietnamese invasion in 1979, about 75% of the teaching forces and 96% of tertiary students had died (Ministry of Education, 1984, cited in Chamnan & Ford, 2004, p. 339). In addition to the heavy destruction of human resources and educational infrastructures, many of the survivors who endured the unnatural selection process by pretending to be deaf, mute, and illiterate has expressed an attitude of distrust, fear, and lack of cooperation.

After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, Cambodia joined the communist bloc and its higher education was heavily influenced by the Soviet and Vietnamese models of higher education. Russian and Vietnamese languages were introduced in Cambodian secondary and higher education with the arrival of many Russian and Vietnamese experts between 1979 and 1989 and the study of French and English was prohibited (Chaman & Ford, 2004). Moreover, a number of Cambodian students and

staff were sent for higher education in various socialist countries. Another legacy from this period was the fragmentation of Cambodian higher education system. As a result, the contemporary Cambodian higher education can be divided into two streams: academic and vocational streams; the vocational stream is supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training while the academic one is overseen by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MOEYS) and a number of other parent ministries (Chealy, 2009; UNESCO, 2006).

After the end of the Cold War, Cambodian higher education has adopted the Western and American models of higher education emphasizing democratization, privatization, and decentralization. Many students received scholarship to pursue higher education in diverse countries and Cambodian HEIs have witnessed an increasing number of partnerships with HEIs in various countries. English, along with other foreign languages, has experienced a rapid increase in usage and study in HEIs as a result of new political and social changes (Clayton, 2006). Moreover, the set goal of establishing the ASEAN Community in 2015 has prompted the deepened regional collaboration and harmonization of higher education, resulting in the increasing students and staff mobility among ASEAN country members.

The contemporary Cambodian higher education, which is defined by the education law as the education following the secondary education in higher educational establishments and has the objectives of imparting not only knowledge and skills but also morality and personality to the students (RGC, 2007), has, to an extent, retained some legacy of the past and faced numerous challenges including the shortage of human, financial, and material resources and the lack of research capacity (Chamnan & Ford, 2004; Kian-woon et al., 2010). The legacy can still be seen in various public HEIs including the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). After being temporarily abandoned and converted into a farm during the Khmer Rouge regime, the RUPP has been restored to its full functions and become a flagship public university in Cambodia. Currently, the RUPP is comprised of three campuses: the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Institute of Foreign languages. The RUPP employs more than 400 full-time staff, trains about 10,000 students, and offers a variety of Bachelor- and Master-level courses (RUPP, 2007). The university is also a regionally recognized university through the awarded membership in the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and has extensive networks with both local and international NGOs, universities and government ministries.

3. Concepts of internationalization of higher education

3.1 Rationales of internationalization

Rationales are the motivations or driving forces that make a country, a sector or an institution internationalize its higher education (De Wit, 2002; Knight, 2004). The rationales of internationalization can be divided into four categories - political, economic, academic and socio/cultural rationales, some of which are of emerging importance (see Table 1).

Table 1: Rationales of internationalization

Rationales	Existing rationales	Of emerging importance at institutional level
Political	Foreign policy, national security, technical assistance, peace and mutual understanding, national identity, and regional identity	International branding and profile, quality enhancement with international standards, income generation, student and staff development, strategic alliances, and knowledge production
Economic	Economic growth and competitiveness, labor market, financial incentives, and national educational demand	
Academic	International dimension in research and teaching, extension of academic horizon, institution building, reputational profile and status, enhancement of quality, and international academic standard	
Social/cultural	Intercultural understanding and intercultural competence, national cultural identity, citizenship development, and social and community development	

Source: De Wit (2002, 2008); Knight (2004, 2008)

3.2 Internationalization activities and strategies

Knight (2004, 2008) develops comprehensive lists of internationalization activities and strategies. The internationalization activities can be grouped into two streams - internationalization “at home” and internationalization “abroad”. The internationalization of higher education “at home” refers to the internationalization activities in a home campus including curriculum and programs, teaching and learning processes, extra-curricular activities, and liaison with local cultural/ethnic groups. The internationalization “abroad,” on the other hand, includes the international aspects of movement of people, delivery of programs, mobility of providers, and international projects. The strategies of internationalization at institutional level are divided into academic strategies (academic programs, research and scholarly collaboration, external relations, and

extra-curricular) and organizational strategies (governance, operations, services, and human resources).

3.3 Benefits and risks of internationalization

Internationalization involves both benefits and risks (Knight, 2008; Schapper & Mayson, 2004; Stier, 2004). The benefits and risks of internationalization at institutional level can be grouped as academic, political, economic, and social/cultural ones (see Table 2).

Table 2: Benefits and risks of internationalization

Benefits		Risks
Academic	Improved academic quality; more internationally-oriented students and staff; innovated curriculum, teaching, and research; strengthened knowledge production and research capacity; greater diversity of education programs and qualifications; increased access to higher educational provisions; and brain gain	Homogenization of curriculum, jeopardized quality of education, brain drain, and increase of foreign “degree mills”/low quality providers
Political	Greater regional and international cooperation and solidarity, promoted cultural values and national identity	Loss of cultural values and national identity
Economic	Supporting knowledge-based and service industries, meeting demand of regional and global economy, increased revenue generation	Commodification and commercialization of higher education
Social/cultural	Promoted global citizenship	Growing inequality in access to international education opportunity and overuse of foreign languages

Sources: Knight (2008); Kuroda et al. (2010)

3.4 Challenges in implementing internationalization

In general, higher education in developing countries is facing a number of issues including the issues of sustainable expansion of equitable coverage of quality education and the effective governance and management practices (World Bank, 2002). In implementing internationalization activities, HEIs in developing countries may face numerous challenges due to the limited resources and limited access to the world’s knowledge and technology (Bloom & Rovosky, 2007). Particularly, those challenges include the lack of financial and other supports from the national government; the lack

of budget and facility, expertise, and experience for implementing internationalization plan; and competing priorities for time and resources in the institution. In addition, internationalization in HEIs in developing countries may face other challenges including the lack of policy/strategy to guide internationalization process, the lack of recognition/interests in internationalization among senior institutional leaders, lack of involvement from faculty members, and administrative inertia.

4. Research methodology

The study employed mixed methodology because of a number of qualities. The use of mixed methods approach has the potential of combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and of understanding the complexity of the issue under study (Creswell, 2009). In addition, the use of mixed methods approach enlarges both the breadth and depth of information; therefore, it enhances the richness of data and increases the validity of the instrumentation of research study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The qualitative methods used in this study included individual interviews with the teaching faculty and administrative staff and focus group conducted with the students at the RUPP. 18 participants were selected based on purposive and snowball sampling. In addition to the interviews and focus groups, the qualitative methods also involved documentation and observation. The quantitative data, on the other hand, was based mainly on the administration of a questionnaire survey because access to other secondary sources of data is limited in Cambodia (Ford, 2006). 218 respondents including 158 students, 42 faculty members, and 18 administrators from different departments, offices, disciplines and year levels voluntarily participated in the survey.

In the analysis of quantitative data, the data obtained from the questionnaire survey was coded and computed in frequency distributions, percentages, and ranks. In each category, the data was presented in terms of aggregate ranks and percentages of each item. It was then followed by the examination of similarities and differences of those values among the three types of professions - the students, faculty members, and administrators. In addition, the Pearson Chi-square tests were calculated to confirm the significance of the differences. The presentation of the quantitative data was followed by the analysis of the qualitative data, which was inductive in nature. The interviewees were allowed to conceptualize the issues under investigation, using their own terms and ideas, which were coded and further explored in the later data-gathering procedures. The coded data was juxtaposed with the conceptual frameworks and the quantitative data. The matched terms and concepts were used to confirm the existing framework and results of the quantitative data while the new ones were added to the existing conceptual categories. Finally the findings of the research were discussed in

comparison with the existing literature, particularly the 2005 IAU Global Survey (Knight, 2008) and the JICA-RI Survey on Leading Universities in East Asia (Kuroda et al., 2010). The two surveys were selected because they were comprehensive in scope and contained similar internationalization elements to those in this study. In addition, both surveys complemented each other in terms of time frames and geographic locations of HEIs under study.

5. Research findings and discussion

5.1 Perceptions of internationalization at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP)

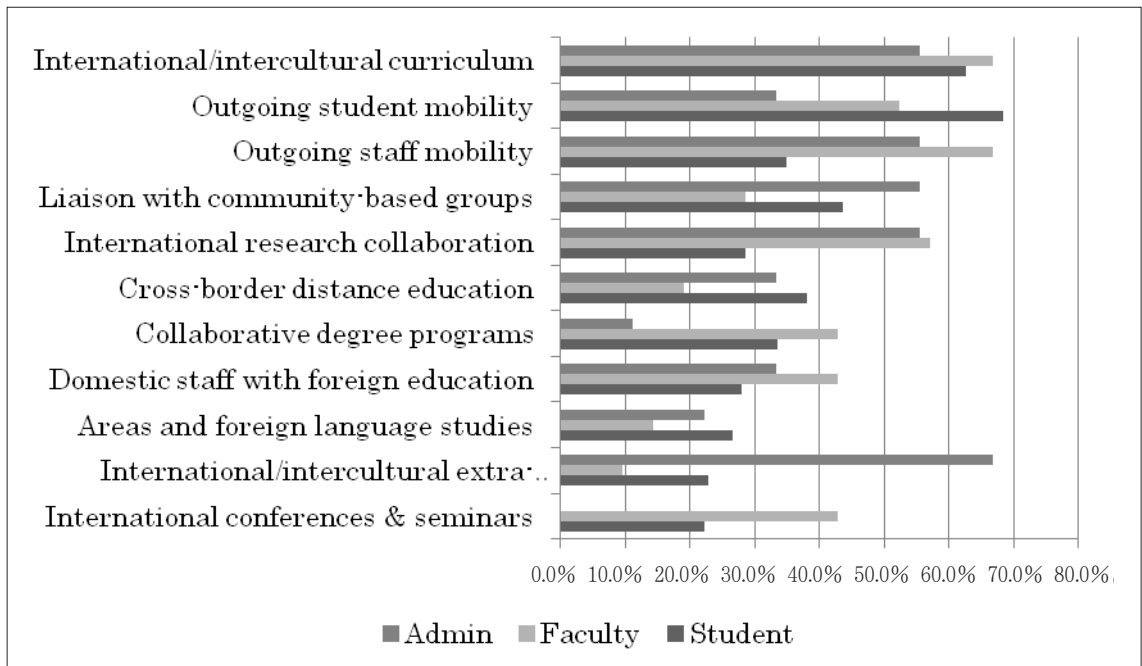
5.1.1 Meanings of internationalization

The RUPP's internal stake-holders understood internationalization of higher education or “Antarakcheataupaniyakam ney udomseksa” as higher education reaching regional or international standards in terms of quality based on advanced scientific knowledge and skills. In addition, they considered international/intercultural dimension of curriculum, outgoing mobility opportunities for students and staff, liaison with community-based cultural and international groups, and a number of other elements of internationalization at “home” as important dimensions (see Figure 1). The qualitative data confirmed this finding. For example, one of the interviewees defined internationalization as followed:

To me, it [internationalization of higher education] is about the opening/exposing our educational institutions to the new ideas, and new technology..... It also means updating our curriculum to the regional standard and perhaps to the international standard... [FEd1]

The findings indicated that although the RUPP's members understood internationalization of higher education in terms of more conventional activities such as the outgoing mobility of students and staff, they started to acknowledge the importance of such innovative elements of internationalization as the use of ICT for cross-border distance education and cross-border collaborative degree programs. In addition, the RUPP's members were rational in ranking such elements of internationalization “abroad” as exporting education programs and establishing university campus abroad low in importance because they were aware of the limited capacity of Cambodian higher education system. However, the findings demonstrated that the RUPP's members lacked appreciation about the importance of the acceptance of foreign students, which was found to be growing in East Asia and Asia Pacific regions (Knight, 2008;

Figure 1: Elements of internationalization by types of professions of respondents

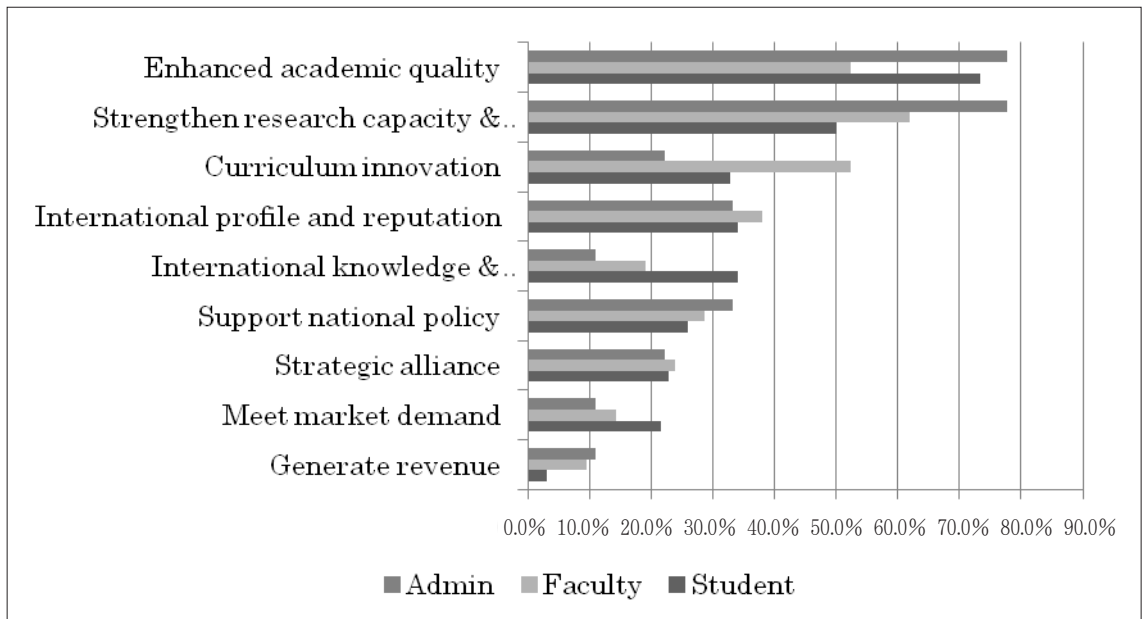


Kuroda et al., 2010). Furthermore, that few administrators acknowledged the importance of cross-border collaborative degree programs and international conferences and seminars as important elements of internationalization would make these activities difficult to be implemented because they needed support and active participation from all stakeholders.

5.1.2 Rationales of internationalization

The qualitative and quantitative data showed that academic rationales were ranked higher in importance than the others. Particularly, enhanced academic quality with international standard and strengthened research capacity and knowledge production were ranked highest with 69.7% and 54.6% respectively in the survey. Meanwhile, such economic rationales as revenue generation and meeting market demand were ranked lowest in importance (see Figure 2). Improving academic quality to meet international or regional standards was reported to be an important rationale for internationalization in Cambodian HEIs. For instance, one informant contended that “for Cambodian universities, internationalization helps improve the quality of education by reaching at least regional standard, if not international one” [FSS1] while another interviewee reasoned that Cambodian HEIs needed to catch up with other well-developed HEIs in the region in order not to be further left behind in the globalized world [AM1].

Figure 2: Rationales of internationalization by types of professions of respondents



There were a number of similarities and differences between the findings in this study and those of the previous ones. Enhancing academic quality was ranked higher in importance in this study than in the 2005 IAU Global Survey (Knight, 2008) and the JICA-RI Survey (Kuroda et al., 2010) while it was the opposite for creating international profile and reputation. This finding indicated that the key members of Cambodia's RUPP considered improving academic quality an urgent task for Cambodian HEIs. In addition, the RUPP's members considered international profile and reputation less important for Cambodian HEIs because the limited capacity of the contemporary Cambodian higher education system rendered international visibility and profile not a priority for their institution at the present.

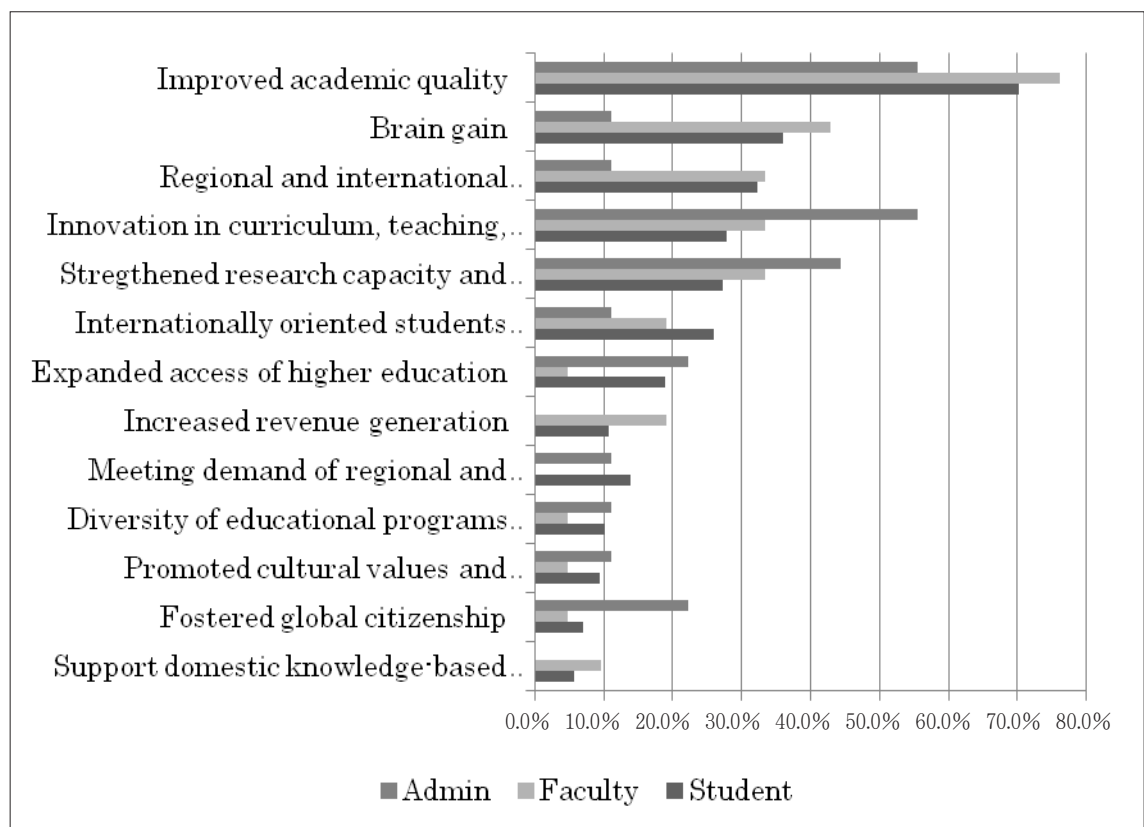
However, similar to the 2005 IAU Global Survey and the JICA-RI Survey, such academic rationales as strengthening research capacity were ranked higher in importance than economic rationales like income generation for Cambodian HEIs. The finding showed that although there was an emerging and increasing trend in commercializing internationalization of higher education, it was not yet regarded as an important source of generating revenues for HEIs in East Asia and Asia Pacific, and particularly for Cambodia's RUPP. The finding might result partly from the fact that the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) was a public institution funded by the government, and partly from the reason that the respondents might view Cambodian HEIs too weak to compete in the global higher education market.

5.1.3 Expected benefits of internationalization

As shown in Figure 3, there were consistencies between the rationales and expected benefits. Improving academic quality was ranked high in importance as both a rationale and benefit and so were the other academic elements including curriculum innovation and strengthened research capacity and knowledge production. Nevertheless, the cultural benefits were ranked lower in importance than the cultural rationales while it was the opposite for the income generation. Matching between rationales and benefits was important because any major differences between the two could lead to unintended benefits and risks (Knight, 2008).

Compared with the 2005 IAU Global Survey and the JICA-RI Survey on Leading Universities in East Asia, enhanced academic quality was considered more important for Cambodia's RUPP than for the averaged HEIs in Asia Pacific and East Asia. This could probably be explained by the fact that the 2005 IAU survey included developed countries' HEIs, in which improved academic quality was not considered of prime importance and the educational quality of Cambodia's RUPP was lower than that of the

Figure 3: Benefits of internationalization by types of professions of respondents



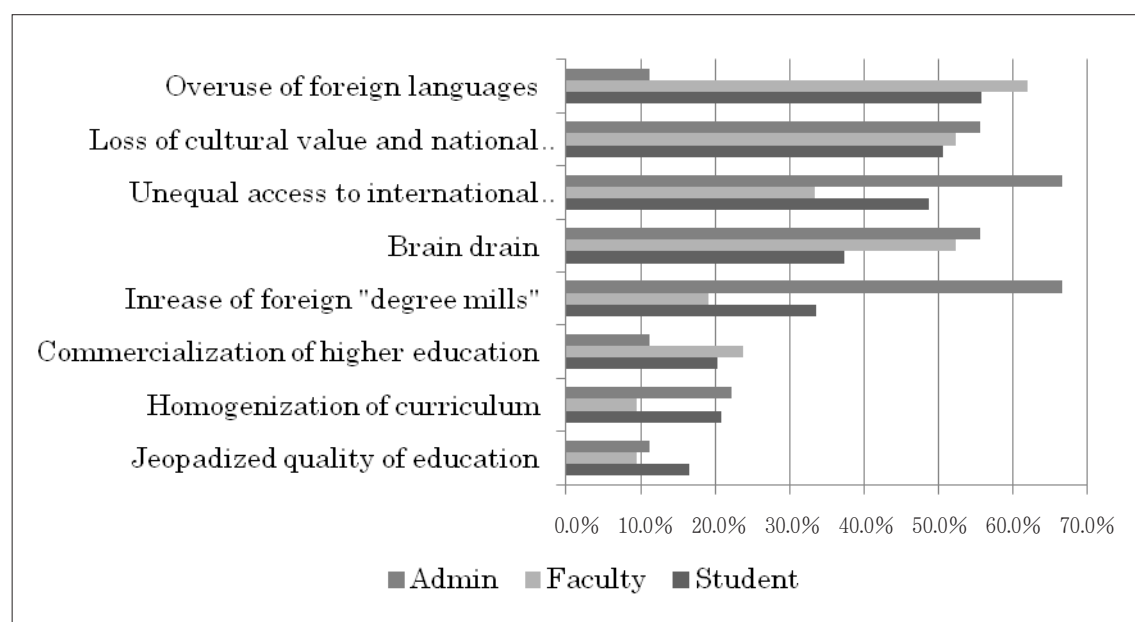
averaged leading universities participating in the JICA-RI survey. Another major difference was that the RUPP's members were positive about the brain gain, which was ranked the lowest in importance in the 2005 IAU survey. This indicated that Cambodian HEIs were in bad need of human resources and internationalization was expected to be a means to achieve this goal.

5.1.4 Risks of internationalization

The overuse of foreign languages and the loss of cultural values and national identity were ranked higher in importance than the others, with 53.2 percent and 51.4 percent of aggregate ranks respectively. Close in importance to the above risks were the growing inequality in access to international higher education, brain drain, and the increased foreign 'degree mills'/low quality providers. The least concerning risks were the jeopardized quality of education and homogenization of curriculum. However, as shown in Figure 4, the students, faculty members and administrators participating in the survey differed over the eminence of the institutional risks.

The loss of cultural values and national identity and the overuse of foreign languages were also reported by the participants in the interviews, particularly the student interviewees. In addition, some faculty and administrator interviewees voiced their concern about the increase of foreign degree mills and low quality domestic providers. In the words of one informant, "some private universities in Cambodia used the

Figure 4: Risks of internationalization by types of professions of respondents



increased number of MOU to persuade the students to enroll in their universities in spite of their low education quality” [AM1]. Another reported risk was the “overstretch of resources and inability to meet expectation of the university’s members” due to the limited resources of Cambodian HEIs and over-expectation of their members [FHA1].

Comparing the findings in this study with those of the 2005 IAU survey revealed a number of similarities and differences. On the similar side, “homogenization of curriculum” and “jeopardized quality of education” were ranked lowest in importance. In addition, the respondents in this study and the 2005 IAU survey were concerned about the brain drain. Brain drain was a more serious concern and had more effects in small developing countries like Cambodia, which was characterized by the severe shortage of human resources and fewer attractive policies to keep talented people. On the different side, while the “overuse of foreign languages” and “loss of cultural values and national identity” were the most eminent risks for the RUPP, the two risks were ranked much lower in importance in the 2005 IAU survey, in which “commercialization of higher education” was ranked highest and foreign “degree mills” as second in importance. This indicated that the key education actors in the RUPP were more concerned about the overuse of foreign languages and the loss of cultural value and national identity because Cambodia was a small developing country; therefore, her ability to guard against such risks was very limited. The loss of cultural values and national identity were serious concerns for small developing countries because the unprecedented force of globalization was dominated by the market-driven Western paradigms (Yang, 2003).

5.2 Current practices of internationalization at the Royal University of Phnom Penh

The examination of available documents, observation of the site, and interviews with various stakeholders indicated that the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) made considerable progress in some areas while facing a number of deficiencies in other areas in implementing internationalization. Internationalization was not much integrated into the vision and mission of the university. The vision of the RUPP was to be the leading higher educational institution in Cambodia in the fields of sciences, social sciences, and humanities in order to achieve sustainable development for human society and preservation of cultural diversity in the region. In addition, the mission of the university aimed mainly at recruiting graduates with ability and skills for serving the goal of national development and self-reliance (RUPP, 2007). Moreover, the RUPP lacked a clear, functional policy and strategy of internationalization and faced a number of constraints including the lack of financial, material, and human resources. Therefore, the internationalization at the RUPP occurred mainly in an ad hoc manner

and based partly on assistance from partner institutions, NGOs, and development agencies.

Nevertheless, there was increasing acknowledgement of the importance of internationalization among the university's leaders. As a result, a vice-rector was appointed to be in charge of international relations, research, and post-graduate programs and an office of international relations was established although it was not much active due to the lack of budget and other resources; therefore, the services supporting international activities in the RUPP were limited. However, the RUPP's leaders expressed their willingness and made an effort to further internationalize the university. Another area of progress of internationalization at the RUPP was the expanding international linkage. Globalization prompts universities around the world to form strategic alliance to compete in the global higher education market (Chan, 2004). As a result, universities around the world forged productive and long-term ties with a small selective number of other institutions based on the subject areas and institutions (Taylor, 2004). For instance, the RUPP established partnership with 54 international NGOs and agencies and held active MOUs with 62 universities in 14 different countries in Asia, Europe, and North America in 2006-08 (RUPP, 2007). The number of active MOUs rose to 68 universities in 13 different countries in 2011. In addition, the RUPP was the first university in Cambodia to be awarded membership in the ASEAN University Network (AUN). Furthermore, the university also housed international cooperation centers including the Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC).

Other expanding areas of internationalization included the students and staff mobility and foreign language study. More and more students and staff of the RUPP were sent abroad for higher education. The returnees were important resources for internationalization activities on campus for the RUPP, in which resources were scarce. Between 2006 and 2008, the RUPP's staff, graduates and students obtained 54 scholarship and exchange programs to study in 14 different countries (RUPP, 2007). However, the incoming foreign student and staff flow was unparalleled. There were fewer foreign students and the majority of them were from neighboring developing countries such as Vietnam and Laos. Beside the student and staff mobility, foreign language study was also experiencing rapid growth at the RUPP. The study of foreign languages was essential for students and faculty members to access the textbooks and research in Cambodia, most of which were written in English and French (RUPP, 2007). Therefore, English was a subject in most fields of study in the university and English was also the medium of instruction for a number of undergraduate and graduate programs at the RUPP.

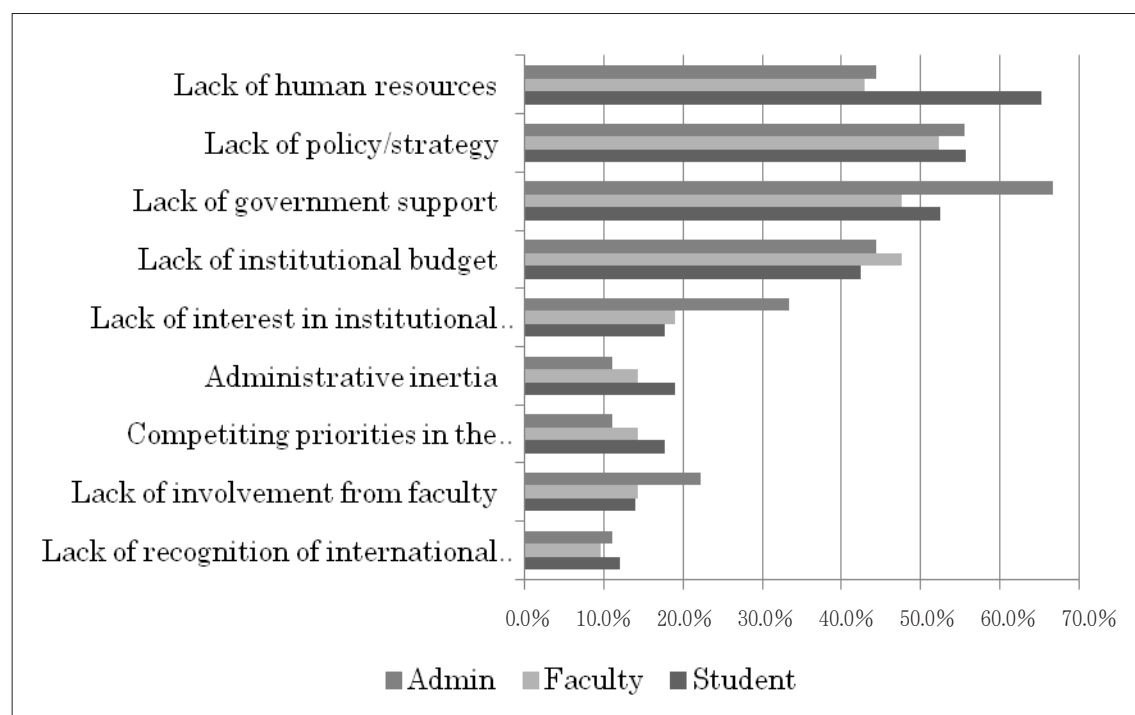
In short, internationalization of higher education in the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) seemed to have happened in an ad hoc, rather than an organized

manner since internationalization was not much integrated in the university's vision and mission and the university neither had clear policy and strategy of internationalization nor allocated sufficient budget and other resources for implementing internationalization activities. However, the importance of internationalization was increasingly acknowledged by the leadership of the university and internationalization activities gradually increased, especially in the forms of international/intercultural dimension of curriculum such as foreign language study, international institutional networks, and outgoing mobility for Cambodian students and staff.

5.3 Challenges faced by the RUPP in implementing internationalization

The RUPP was reported to face a number of challenges including the lack of expertise and experience in implementing internationalization, the lack of policy/strategy to guide the internationalization process, the lack of financial and other support from the national government, and the lack of financial resources and support at institutional level (see Figure 5). The qualitative data added a few institutional challenges such as the lack of willingness among the university's leadership, the limited institutional financial resources, and the unpreparedness of the students in participating in internationalization activities. Moreover, the lack of human resources, particularly the

Figure 5: Challenges of internationalization by types of professions of respondents



low education backgrounds among the administrators, was reported to have challenged the university's effort in implementing internationalization activities/programs.

The finding indicated that higher educational institutions in small developing countries like Cambodia's RUPP faced multiple challenges in implementing internationalization. The magnitude of the challenges was formidable, resulting from Cambodia's particular context. For instance, the RUPP, like other public HEIs in Cambodia, still suffered from the lack of human resources resulted from the huge loss of educated people and material resources during the civil wars and Khmer Rouge's genocidal regime in the 1970s-90s. As a result, many administrators in the RUPP were not professional ones and had relatively poor education backgrounds. In addition, only 15 out of its 294 academic staff held PhDs and 132 had Master degrees (RUPP, 2007).

6. Conclusion and policy implications

The study indicates that the university's stakeholders' perceptions of internationalization are influenced by their national and institutional contexts and in turn affect their implementation of internationalization. Therefore, contexts of small developing countries and their HEIs are important in understanding their internationalization process and internationalization provided by the mainstream literature does not adequately capture the complexity of the issues happening in small developing countries situated at the periphery of the uneven global knowledge system. For instance, the key education actors of Cambodia's RUPP still place prime importance on academic and social/cultural aspects of internationalization despite the growth in the market model of international education. This finding is consistent with the previous study that the paradigm of cooperative internationalization is still vigorous despite the rise of the paradigm of competitive globalization (Kehm & Teichler, 2007).

In addition, the internationalization "at home" is deemed to be more appropriate than internationalization "abroad" for higher education institutions (HEIs) in small developing countries like the Cambodia's RUPP. Therefore, the government of developing countries should pay more attention on such elements of internationalization "at home" as international/intercultural dimension of curriculum and international research collaboration because they provides opportunities for all the stakeholders and their HEIs to have international experience, while at the same time reducing such risks as brain-drain. Moreover, the role of abroad-educated students and staff in internationalization on campus should be appropriately considered in such resource-poor environment.

The study has a number of policy implications and recommendations. At national and sector levels, an effective regulatory system is needed to prevent the foreign "degree mills" and low quality domestic providers. The existing regulatory system

needs to upgrade its effectiveness and ability to oversee the growing number of HEIs and the increasing complexity of their operation. A clear strategy of internationalization along with committed financial, material, and human resources at national and sector levels will be significant to ensure that the optimum benefits of internationalization will be realized while reducing such risks as the loss of cultural values and national identity, and the brain drain. Such objectives could be realized only through concerted efforts at national and sector levels. Besides, in order that a concrete, functional strategy/policy of internationalization is formed, an effective database system should be established to collect and update timely and accurate information, which can be fed into other stages of policy making process.

At institutional level, clear internationalization strategies or plans that take into account the interests and concerns of various key education stakeholders including the students, faculty members and administrative staff are indispensable for Cambodian HEIs to benefit from internationalization and globalization. In addition to the formation of the strategies, other efforts must be made to ensure the successful implementation of the internationalization plans, including the active participation of all stakeholders, committed resources, and strong leadership. Finally, an effective mechanism should be established to harmonize the different generations of faculty and staff, and put their knowledge and skills into potential uses. The mechanism should address the issues of different languages, perspectives, values, methodology, and ways of working acquired by the different generations of RUPP's staff, who went through various courses of internationalization process influenced by different higher education models such as the French, Soviet-Vietnamese, and the Western models.

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